

PUBPOL 475: Philanthropic Foundations in the Public Arena
Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy
Winter Semester 2015

Contact information

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Office hours: Mondays, 1:30-3:00 PM; Thursdays, 10:00-11:30 AM (by appointment; sign up in advance at <http://tinyurl.com/METSofficehours>)

Class schedule

Wednesdays, 10:00 AM-1:00 PM

Location: Weill Hall 1230

Course overview

Private philanthropic foundations in the U.S. have long played central roles in advancing social change and shaping policy priorities, while simultaneously being relatively unconstrained by democratic accountability mechanisms. While this autonomy allows foundations to innovate, experiment and take risks that may lead to effective policy outcomes, it has also historically led to normative concerns about the power of private wealth within the public realm.

The core framework of the course will engage with these questions by utilizing an experiential approach, wherein students will participate in a hands-on process of making actual grants to nonprofit organizations. The Once Upon A Time Foundation has provided a grant of \$50,000 that the class will allocate as a course-long project, directly applying the concepts discussed during class through a practical lens. Students will determine the mission and objective of the funding based on students' values; the organization(s) to which funding will be allocated; the number of and size of the gift(s) that will be made; how the gift(s) will be awarded; and how the impact of the gift(s) will be evaluated and assessed.

Grading

Students will be evaluated based on their performance in four areas of the course.

- Written process journals: 15%
- In-class participation (discussion contributions and preparation): 30%
- Grantmaking group project: 45%
 - First-round presentation in teams of four people: 10%
 - Written due diligence report for final presentations: 20%
 - Final group presentation: 15%
- Final reflection: 10%

Assignments

Written process journals. Students will keep journals of their reactions to the grantmaking process, and will submit them at two intervals during the semester, at approximately halfway through the semester at the conclusion of the grantmaking process. These journals are intended to be predominantly a formative

tool, enabling students to process their reactions, emotions, and reflections during the course of the semester in a concrete manner, and recording these written observations in order to serve the composition of final summative reflections. While the journals will not be graded, students are expected to regularly write about their reactions to the process, questions they may have, and ideas to share with classmates.

Class participation. The course is highly interactive and discussion-based, and as such, participation is a significant and crucial component of students' experiences. Contributions in class should reveal a substantial familiarity with the assigned readings, a capacity to analyze the issues and problems under discussions, and an ability to incorporate, synthesize, and constructively criticize the comments of classmates. Students are expected to read all the readings assigned for every class session and actively engage in all in-class exercises, which will include small-group work as well as larger-group discussions and debates.

Grantmaking group project. The group project component of the class grantmaking process will include three components. On the first day of class, students will form teams of four to five people based on common interest or issue areas. These groups will meet outside of class to determine four nonprofit organizations to present as candidates for possible funding allocation.

Teams will present their four choices in a first round of presentations on March 11. Teams will formally present the following components to the class: A) the process by which they arrived at their decisions and B) a case for the organizations they chose. These presentations, which should be approximately 15 to 20 minutes in length. Following the results of these presentations, the teams will conduct formal due diligence on a subset of organizations to consider in a final round of discussion.

Teams will make final presentations on April 15, detailing their final recommendations regarding funding candidates. Prior to the final presentations, teams will submit formal written reports summarizing their organizational research on the nonprofits that are being considered, and all students will read them in their entirety.

Final reflection. Students will compose 10 page papers that reflect on their learning in the class, how the process of engaging in grantmaking contributed to their development, and their ideas regarding charitable and philanthropic engagement going forward after the class.

Note about assignments: Unless otherwise stated in class, written assignments are to be completed in Times New Roman 12 point font, double-spaced, and submitted to Drop Box on CTools.

Course policies

- Students are expected to complete an anonymous pre-class and post-class survey to be shared with the course sponsor, the Once Upon A Time Foundation.
- Students are expected to attend class regularly and on time, and to notify the instructor of all planned absences and late arrivals in advance, barring emergencies. Students who have more than one unexcused absence will relinquish their spaces in the class. Instances of lateness to class of more than 15 minutes, barring emergencies, will be counted as unexcused absences. Students must be present on the first day of class in order to remain enrolled, except by prior arrangement with the instructor.
- Paper extensions require prior arrangements with the instructor. There will be no exceptions to this policy, barring emergencies. Late papers will receive a deduction of one course grade per day, and papers that are more than two days late will not be accepted.

- Laptops are not permitted in class, except when accommodations are necessary for students' learning. Accommodations should be arranged with the instructor in advance of the course with appropriate documentation.
- Students are expected to conduct themselves with academic honesty and integrity as established at http://www.rackham.umich.edu/policies/academic_and_professional_integrity/.
- The instructor reserves the right to make reasonable changes to the syllabus throughout the course of the semester, with appropriate notice to students, in the event of timely news developments that may align with relevant topics under discussion. As such, students should rely on the copy of the syllabus that will be posted and updated regularly on CTools.

Class schedule

All readings will either be posted on the course CTools website or are available online as indicated in the syllabus.

Week 1. Wednesday, January 7. Introductions; overview of course; discussion of class values and priorities

Readings:

- Fleishman, J. 2007. *Foundations: A great American secret*, pp. 1-45. New York: Public Affairs.
- Soskis, B. 2014. "The importance of criticizing philanthropy." *The Atlantic*, May 21. Available at <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/05/the-case-for-philanthropy-criticism/361951/>

Due: Pre-class survey

Week 2. Wednesday, January 14. Charity and philanthropy

Readings:

- Lynn, E. and Wisely, S. *Four traditions of philanthropy*. Available at http://d5gb0329j18mh.cloudfront.net/site/uploads/2013/06/Four_Traditions_of_Philanthropy.pdf
- Gross, R. 2003. "Giving in America: From charity to philanthropy." In Friedman, L. and McGarvie, M. (eds.), *Charity, Philanthropy and Civility in American History*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Singer, P. 2013. "Good charity, bad charity." *The New York Times*, August 10. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/11/opinion/sunday/good-charity-bad-charity.html?smid=tw-share>

Week 3. Wednesday, January 21. Locus of control in philanthropy: Case study of Give Directly

Readings:

- *This American Life* 503, "I was just trying to help," August 16, 2013. Listen to the radio programme at <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/503/i-was-just-trying-to-help>
- Goldstein, J. 2013. "Is it nuts to give to the poor with no strings attached?" *The New York Times*, August 13. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/18/magazine/is-it-nuts-to-give-to-the-poor-without-strings-attached.html?pagewanted=2&r=1>
- Peruse <http://www.givewell.org/international/top-charities/give-directly>
- Starr, K. and Hattendorf, L. 2014. "GiveDirectly? Not so fast." *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, March 11. Available at http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/givedirectly_not_so_fast?utm_source=Enews&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=SSIR_Now&utm_content=Title

Week 4. Wednesday, January 28. Philanthropy and issues of democracy; process discussion

Readings:

- Reich, R. 2013. “What are foundations for?” (Read lead article by Reich and all responses). *Boston Review*, March 1. Available at <http://www.bostonreview.net/forum/foundations-philanthropy-democracy>
- LaMarche, G. 2014. “Is philanthropy bad for democracy?” *The Atlantic*, October 30. Available at <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2014/10/is-philanthropy-good-for-democracy/381996/>
- Callahan, D. 2014. “The billionaires’ park.” *The New York Times*, November 30. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/01/opinion/the-billionaires-park.html>

Due: Written process journals

Week 5. Wednesday, February 4. No class

Week 6. Wednesday, February 11. Strategic philanthropy

Readings:

- Frumkin, P. 2006. *Strategic giving: The art and science of philanthropy* (excerpt). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Scott, J. 2009. “The politics of venture philanthropy in charter school policy and advocacy.” *Educational Policy* 23 (106).
- Reckhow, S. 2013. *Follow the money: How foundation dollars shape public school politics* (excerpt). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Materials for organizational assessment/due diligence work

Week 7. Wednesday, February 18. Foundations and public partnerships: Case study of the Detroit bankruptcy and the Detroit Art Institute

Readings:

- Kennedy, R. 2014. “‘Grand Bargain’ saves the Detroit Institute of Arts.” *The New York Times*, November 7. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/08/arts/design/grand-bargain-saves-the-detroit-institute-of-arts.html>
- Davey, G. 2014. “Finding \$816 million, and fast, to save Detroit.” *The New York Times*, November 8. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/08/us/finding-816-million-and-fast-to-save-detroit.html>
- Bomey, N., Gallagher, J., and Stryker, M. 2014. “How Detroit was reborn: The inside story of Detroit’s historic bankruptcy case.” *Detroit Free Press*, November 9. Available at <http://www.freep.com/longform/news/local/detroit-bankruptcy/2014/11/09/detroit-bankruptcy-rosen-orr-snyder/18724267/>

Week 8. Wednesday, February 25. The supply side: The “warm glow” of philanthropy

Readings:

- “Soup-kitchen volunteers hate college-application padding brat.” 2003. *The Onion*. Available at <http://www.theonion.com/articles/soupkitchen-volunteers-hate-collegeapplicationpadd,1422/>. *Nota bene: satire!*
- Salmon, F. 2012. “Philanthropy: You’re doing it wrong.” *Reuters*, December 26. Available at <http://blogs.reuters.com/felix-salmon/2012/12/25/philanthropy-youre-doing-it-wrong/>
- Colapinto, J. 2012. “Looking good: The new boom in celebrity philanthropy.” *The New Yorker*, June 26. Available at <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/03/26/looking-good>

- Townsend, L. 2014. "How much has the ice bucket challenge achieved?" BBC News. Available at <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-29013707>
- MacAskill, W. 2014. "The cold, hard truth about the ice bucket challenge." *Quartz*, August 14. Available at <http://qz.com/249649/the-cold-hard-truth-about-the-ice-bucket-challenge/>

Due: Written process journals

Week 9. Wednesday, March 4. Spring break, no class

Week 10. Wednesday, March 11. Philanthropy workshop: First round of presentations; process discussion

Due: First-round group presentations

Week 11. Wednesday, March 18. Grantwriting and theories of change

Readings:

- "If the Founding Fathers wrote a grant proposal." Available at <http://www.blueavocado.org/node/804>
- Frumkin, P. 2006. *Strategic giving: The art and science of philanthropy* (excerpt). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Grantwriting documents:
 - "Approaching the Foundation"
 - "Knowledge base – Letter of Inquiry"
 - "Letter of Inquiry strategy"
 - "Writing a successful grant proposal"
 - Sample Request for Proposals
 - Successful grant proposal to Surdna Foundation

Week 12. Wednesday, March 25. Measuring impact; case study of the Robin Hood Foundation

Readings:

- Ebrahim, A. and Ragnan, V.K. 2011. "The limits of nonprofit impact: A contingency framework for measuring social performance." Harvard Business School working paper.
- Gregory, A. and Howard, D. 2009. "The nonprofit starvation cycle." *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall.
- Pallotta, D. 2013. "The way we think about charity is dead wrong." TED (watch the talk online at http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_pallotta_the_way_we_think_about_charity_is_dead_wrong?language=en)
- Eisinger, J. 2014. "A shake-up as the financial world enters philanthropy." *The New York Times*, December 10. Available at http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2014/12/10/a-shake-up-as-the-financial-world-infiltrates-philanthropy/?_r=0
- Ebrahim, A. and Ross, C. 2011. "The Robin Hood Foundation." Harvard Business School case.

Week 13. Wednesday, April 1. Accountability, collaboration and community responsiveness: Case study of the Meyer Foundation and Southern Partners Fund

Readings:

- Silver, I. 2005. "Living up to the promise of collaboration: Foundations and community organizations as patterns in the revitalization of poor neighborhoods." In Faber, D. and D. McCarthy, eds. (2005). *Foundations for social change: Critical perspectives on philanthropy and popular movements*.

- Eikenberry, A. 2006. “Philanthropy, voluntary association, and governance beyond the state: Giving circles and challenges for democracy.” *Administration and Society* 39 (7).
- Arrillaga-Andresen, L. 2010. “Burt and Mary Meyer Foundation and the Southern Partners Fund.” Stanford Graduate School of Business case, SI-118.

Week 14. Wednesday, April 8. Philanthropy and inequality

Readings:

- Singer, P. 2006. “What should a billionaire give – and what should you?” *The New York Times*, December 17. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/17/magazine/17charity.t.html?pagewanted=all>.
- Buffett, P. 2013. “The charitable-industrial complex” (op-ed and responses in Letters). *The New York Times*, July 26. Available at http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/27/opinion/the-charitable-industrial-complex.html?_r=0 and <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/30/opinion/on-charity-doing-a-better-job-of-doing-good.html>
- Husock, H. 2013. “What Peter Buffett gets wrong about philanthropy.” *Forbes*, July 27. Available online at <http://www.forbes.com/sites/howardhusock/2013/07/27/what-peter-buffet-gets-wrong-about-philanthropy/>
- Moskowitz, D. 2013. “Peter Buffett and the media-‘Karpman Drama Triangle’ complex.” Available at <https://medium.com/i-m-h-o/625c1bf280c8>, July 29.
- “Was Carnegie right about philanthropy?” *New Yorker* blog. Available at http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/currency/2014/02/philanthropy-50-zuckerberg-carnegie-inequality.html?utm_source=tny&utm_campaign=generalsocial&utm_medium=facebook&mbid=social_facebook

Due: Due diligence reports

Week 15. Wednesday, April 15. Philanthropy workshop: Final presentations

Week 16. Wednesday, April 22. Concluding comments, presentation to grantee organizations and class celebration (brunch at instructor’s home)

Due: Written process journals, final reflection memos, and post-class survey